



Second chances in life are possible!

In the stifling heat of June, I was getting to the end of the work I had set out to complete this trip; checking on all the families of the children that “Wings for Little Minds” is supporting. Nearly 100 were completed and soon I would be tidying up and my work here would be done, but surprises always come when you least expect them.

I heard from villagers that a couple of families in Narsinghpur (a neighbouring village of Malkainia) had a couple of families who were really struggling to get their daughter to school. As the heat of the sun eased a little in one afternoon, I trekked to the village seeking out the families.

The village of Narsinghpur is made up of about 30 houses, mostly made of mud and straw, with one or two made of poor quality bricks and concrete. The mud tracks between the houses form the only “street” in this village, and the dirt is cracked and dry. Currently in Narsinghpur, there is no running water in the homes, nor toilet facilities. The only water source comes from a few scattered hand pumps in the village. There is no electricity in most homes, as the village only gets electricity for 4 hours each day, but the catch is that you don’t know which 4 hours since the time varies a great deal each day.

There are cow and buffalo waste patties on mud walls being dried to provide fuel for the cooking fires and most people live on one meal per day in the evenings, along with whatever they can get during the day. When I say one meal, think of a quarter of your full meal. More than half the children in this village go to school daily without breakfast.

I met Laxmi Singh (14) who was going to GIC Sirpatpur school, but her mother, Geeta Singh, did not have money this year to pay the admission fees for classes starting in July. Having talked to the mother and some other neighbours about their circumstances, I paid the school fees for the year and handed the mother the receipt. Laxmi has now been provided an education for the next year.

Whilst talking to Geeta, Laxmi’s elder sister Saloo (17) was present and I enquired as to why Saloo is not at school. Geeta explained that Saloo had been attending a school in the nearby town of Harriya (SSD Intercollege) but was forced to abandon her studies because the family could not afford the fees of 300 rupees per month.

“It has been really difficult to manage since their father died in 2006” said Geeta



I realised in that instance that Saloo's life had very little prospect if she did not complete her education. Looking at her eyes, clothing and feet (feet that probably have never seen a pair of shoes apart from plastic flip-flops) I knew we had to help.

I asked Geeta if Saloo would wish to continue her schooling and Saloo answered "Ha" (yes in Hindi) even before I finished my sentence. We all laughed and I paid Geeta the full years fees in cash and promised to check if Saloo started attending in July.

On the 20th July, my nephew in India went on his motorcycle to Saloo's school and confirmed that she has indeed been attending everyday.

A second chance in a life had been given thanks to all of our supporters.

The next time someone asks whether a second chance in life is possible, tell them YES!!!

Compiled by **Stephanie**

(a sponsor)